

Chamber Music in the Early Twentieth Century:  
Features of Aram Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano in G Minor* and Béla  
Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano*

By  
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Submitted to the graduate degree program in Music  
and the Graduate Faculty of the University of Kansas in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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## Abstract

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the intensified development of chamber music, and trios deploying the clarinet, violin and piano gained growing popularity because of the unique ensemble produced by these instruments working in synergy. Against this background of chamber music, this document aims to examine the key features of Aram Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Béla Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, and discuss specific approaches to rehearse clarinet, violin and piano trios. More specifically, this document addresses the major features of Khachaturian's *Trio* and Bartók's *Contrasts* with an emphasis on the composers' unique manipulation of rhythms and folk melodies in their pieces. Moreover, effective rehearsal techniques conducive to the satisfactory performance of a violin, clarinet and piano trio are also expounded in this research. By synthesizing musical features and rehearsing approaches, this thesis intends to provide theorists and practitioners with more insights regarding the performance of Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*.

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## I. Introduction

The beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by composers' and musicians' search for and choice of new forms and sounds in order to highlight their vision of music. During that period, innovative approaches to music were combined with traditional or folk elements.<sup>1</sup> Such experiments with combining different materials have led to the creation of new ensembles and music pieces that reflected the tendencies of that time.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, the popularity of chamber music further rose as composers took the advantages of incorporating clarinet, violin and piano as a trio. In the 1930s, trios with clarinet, violin and piano became a response to classical trios that enlisted clarinet, viola and piano, or clarinet, cello and piano.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the search for new instrument combinations in chamber music resulted in the creation of a unique ensemble where the original balance focusing on combining instruments with different registers (high, middle and low) was changed to the accentuation of the high register in the clarinet and violin. The combination of these instruments was uncommon and it in turn provided composers with more opportunities for expressions.

In 1932, echoing the trends of the early twentieth century, Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) created his *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* where he mixed different approaches building a unique rhythmic pattern for the piece and through the use of folk melodies.<sup>4</sup> In a similar vein, in 1938, Béla Bartók (1881-1945) also turned to trios with clarinet, violin and piano and composed his famous *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, in which he also focused on accentuating a variety of cross-rhythms (a rhythm used simultaneously with

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Wright, *Listening to Music*, 8th ed (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2017), 351.

<sup>2</sup> James McCalla, *Twentieth-Century Chamber Music: Routledge Studies in Musical Genres* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 190.

<sup>3</sup> Lee Stacey and Lol Henderson, eds, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 116.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Jaffé, *Historical Dictionary of Russian Music* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 176.

another rhythm or rhythms) and elements of folk music.<sup>5</sup> These musical creations by Khachaturian and Bartók are viewed today as standards for such trios; it is however still very important to examine specific features of these two works that give insights to the unconventional forms of music during the early part of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, it is critical to refer to the composers' backgrounds in order to better understand what elements and why they chose to include them in the particular works this research focuses on.

The significance of this study is in demonstrating how composers use cross-rhythms and folk music to create unique chamber compositions for clarinet, violin and piano. The findings of this research can help explain why Khachaturian's and Bartók's pieces are considered as the staple and standard for such type of ensembles today. In spite of being viewed as controversial and unbalanced in the 1920s-1930s, trios for clarinet, violin and piano enjoyed growing popularity because of the audience's interest in pieces similar to *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*.<sup>7</sup> Apart from adding to the research on trios for violin, clarinet and piano with special reference to identifying specific features of Khachaturian's and Bartók's pieces in general, this research also focuses on presenting rehearsal techniques that could prove very serviceable to performers of these works, at a point when the literature on rehearsal practices for violin, clarinet and piano trio is significantly lacking. As an appreciation of the organic and equilibrium relations between theory and practice, the analysis of the theoretical literature on rehearsal techniques is firmly supported by the discussion of musicians' experiences in performing these pieces.

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<sup>5</sup> James M. Keller, *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 30.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, *Listening to Music*, 351.

<sup>7</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 116.



Based on these premises, this study seeks to fulfil the following purposes: examining the key features of Khachaturian's and Bartók's works and discussing approaches to rehearse a clarinet, violin and piano trio, through addressing the following questions: a) What are the key features of Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*? b) How do the composers use rhythms and folk melodies in their pieces? c) What rehearsal techniques can be used to make the performance of a violin, clarinet and piano trio consistent and up to the standards? These questions are to be answered by reviewing the literature on the selected pieces and discussing rehearsal techniques used by performers of the *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*.

## II. Methodology

To answer the research questions and thus achieve the purpose of this study, it is necessary to conduct a literature review of secondary sources pertinent to the topic. In this part, the focus is on analyzing the information presented in books, scholarly articles, dissertations and other relevant sources that have described and evaluated the key features of Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*. The selection of sources for the review is based on the necessity of covering the works of both the contemporaries of the composers and modern researchers. The rationale behind the scope is that the analyzed data should be extensive enough to not only provide simple answers to the research questions but also place the studied pieces in the larger context of music in the twentieth century. In terms of the content, the sources have been selected with reference to their capacity to provide information regarding the composers' backgrounds, their use of rhythmic patterns, and the integration of folk melodies into their pieces.

These sources are crucial to analyze the selected works, interpret the composers' use of techniques, and evaluate the relevance of said techniques from the perspective of performers. To emphasize the pragmatic aspect of this research, an additional category of reviewed literature concerning the application of rehearsal techniques used by trios is discussed in detail. In this dissertation, the researcher starts out by providing a description of Khachaturian's and Bartók's backgrounds, then shortly outlines the key features of these pieces relevant to their function and performance by trios, which further breaks into providing the analysis of rhythmic patterns, describing the use of folk melodies and analyzing effective rehearsal techniques based on the actual experience as a performer.

### III. Aram Khachaturian and Béla Bartók: Composers' Backgrounds

Analyzing folk traditions that are used in the two selected pieces is almost impossible without discussing the composers' backgrounds that influenced the formation of their styles. Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978) was born in an Armenian family in Tiflis (modern-day Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia). As a consequence, the composer was brought up in a place where different cultures and traditions, including Georgian, Armenian, Russian and even Turkish ones, were kaleidoscopically mixed.<sup>8</sup> This upbringing influenced Khachaturian's style in a way that it reflected folk melodies typical of various cultures in the Soviet Union. Khachaturian's interest in music developed when he was a child playing the piano by ear, which understandably involved considerable elements of improvisation and popular folk tunes. After moving to Moscow in 1922, Khachaturian became a student of the Gnessin Conservatory where he focused on musical studies and theory to consolidate his educational background.<sup>9</sup> Khachaturian then studied composition at the Moscow Conservatory.<sup>10</sup> It is also important to note that, during this period, works by Khachaturian were subsequently influenced by the tutelage of Nikolai Myaskovsky. Myaskovsky introduced his students to the works of contemporary Western composers such as Bartók, Stravinsky, Hindemith, Berg, and Schoenberg. As Khachaturian explicitly remarks, "Myaskovsky encouraged curiosity in his pupils" about Western modernism.<sup>11</sup>

While studying at the Moscow Conservatory, Khachaturian composed the *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, which became the only piece of chamber music by the composer. According to Heilman, the musical and rhythmic patterns of the composer's first

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<sup>8</sup> Jaffé, *Historical Dictionary of Russian Music*, 176-177.

<sup>9</sup> "Aram Khachaturian: A Complete Catalogue," *Le Chant du Monde*, n.d., PDF file, 26 Mar. 2018, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Anastasia Christofakis, "The Music That Shaped a Nation: The Role of Folk Music, the Duduk, and Clarinet in the Works of Contemporary Armenian Composers Aram Khachaturian and Vache Sharafyan," (Diss. Florida State University, 2015), 30-31.

<sup>11</sup> Shlifstein, S. Myaskovsky, N. Y.: Articles, Letters, Recollections, Moscow: Muzyka. 1964.

works were influenced by his Armenian and Georgian origins, the Russian music tradition, and by the interpretation of folk music commonly heard in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.<sup>12</sup> It is clearly evident that Khachaturian's focus on different cultures and folk melodies contributed to the creation of his unique musical style which was already unmistakably represented in his *Trio*. His first works were highly regarded and appreciated by other composers, including Dmitri Shostakovich. Khachaturian's interest in folk music came from not only his background and experience but also his firm intentions to synthesize modern approaches to twentieth century music and music traditions of countries such as Armenia and Georgia, among others.<sup>13</sup>

After going through the basic personal and educational background of Khachaturian, special attention should be directed to Béla Bartók (1881-1945), one of the most famous and important composers of the twentieth century who had a major influence on Khachaturian. Bartók was born in Sânnicolau Mare, Romania, which was part of Austria-Hungary in the 1880s. Despite receiving only limited music education early on, Bartók began to compose small works in the 1890s, and he later continued and extended his education at the Budapest Academy of Music, where Bartók developed his skills as both a pianist and a composer.<sup>14</sup> In the 1900s, the composer's interests in studying folk music grew further, and he conducted numerous expeditions in order to learn more about Hungarian, Slovakian and Romanian music traditions.<sup>15</sup> This experience empowered the composer to form his own musical style that later had been described by critics as rather radical.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Jason S. Heilman, "Program Notes," Chamber Music Tulsa, 2012, PDF file, 26 Mar. 2018, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Christofakis, "The Music That Shaped a Nation," 32-33.

<sup>14</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> Béla Bartók, *Rumanian Folk Music: Instrumental Melodies*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (New York: Hague, 1967), 47-49.

<sup>16</sup> David Cooper, *Béla Bartók* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 22-29.

Bartók grew into a popular composer in Europe in 1918-1922 as his unconventional pieces based on folk melodies attracted the audience's attention. During this period, Bartók also became interested in studying oriental, Turkish and Serbian music traditions.<sup>17</sup> In the late part of the 1930s, the composer decided to move to the United States. That was the time when Bartók's doubts and ideas manifested themselves in his *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*. Interestingly, *Contrasts* became his only chamber work to be based on the use of a wind instrument. The composer intended to create a piece that could be used by Benny Goodman, a clarinetist, Joseph Szigeti, a violinist, and Bartók himself as a pianist in a trio.<sup>18</sup> *Contrasts* was originally planned to be a two-movement piece with elements of a rhapsody, and Szigeti and Goodman as the desired performers for the work.

However, as he planned to move to the United States, Bartók expanded his work into a unique three-movement piece that also included the piano. The performance of this piece was expected to influence Bartók's move to New York, a step that became a reality in 1940.<sup>19</sup> While in New York, the composer experienced difficulties with adapting to new music circles, but he continued to work on concertos and sonatas, and these works are viewed by critics as masterpieces today.<sup>20</sup> Altogether, it is safe to say that both composers demonstrated their interest in folk music because of their personal and cultural backgrounds as well as episodes of their lives.

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<sup>17</sup> Tricia Bogdan, "Interpreting Bartok: A Creative Process," Thesis, Portland State University, 2016, 7-12.

<sup>18</sup> Daphne Leong, Daniel Silver, and Jennifer John, "Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók's *Contrasts*: Performance and Analysis," *Gamut: Online Journal of the Music Theory Society of the Mid-Atlantic* 1.1 (2008): 1-3.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, 22-29.

<sup>20</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 45-47.

#### IV. The Key Features of Khachaturian's and Bartók's Pieces

The analysis of Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* in this paper, as well as the existing literature on these two pieces, has enabled the identification of key features of these works in a detailed manner. Khachaturian's *Trio* consists of three parts. The first movement is played as "Andante Con Dolore, Con Molto Espressione." It is a duet with the clarinet and violin that begins in G minor and then ends in C minor.<sup>21</sup> In this part, the piano only supports the music of the violin and clarinet, and it should be noted that the clarinet seems to imitate the sound of the Transcaucasian wind instrument zurna (a wind instrument played in central Eurasia).<sup>22</sup> The second movement is played as "Allegro" with highly accentuated dance rhythms. The third movement of the piece is "Moderato Prestissimo", which represents the composer's interpretations of Uzbek folk melodies. This part is characterized by emphasized timbre and harmonic contrasts, as well as by a colorful pattern of melody.<sup>23</sup> From these tempo markings, it's not difficult to tell that the traditional fast-slow-fast movement form which are widely used in such works was changed by the composer in his *Trio*.

Researchers explain the strong influence of folk elements in Khachaturian's *Trio* through not only his background and interest in Armenian, Georgian, Uzbek and other traditions but also the impact of his teacher Myaskovsky, who in turn received his training from Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. Both Rimsky-Korsakov and Myaskovsky were recognized by the stamp of Russian folk music on their works, and Khachaturian was also encouraged to include folk elements in his pieces as the epitome of his musical style.<sup>24</sup> In terms of the *Trio*'s instrumentation, Khachaturian

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<sup>21</sup> Levon Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Era: 1917–1991*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 2017), 112-113.

<sup>22</sup> Christofakis, "The Music That Shaped a Nation," 37-38.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 36.

explained for this unusual choice noting that it was important for him to present an Uzbek melody with the help of an appropriate wind instrument, and here the clarinet was decided as the cornerstone to support folk melodies and break the traditions for ensembles.<sup>25</sup>

By representing folk melodies in his piece, Khachaturian supported the idea of pan-Soviet nationalism that was also promoted by Myaskovsky. This opinion is advanced and developed by various researchers in their works.<sup>26</sup> The key focus here was on how the composer accentuated idiosyncratic folk melodies with the help of the sounds of the clarinet and violin. From this perspective, it can be seen that in all three movements, the piano plays a supportive function, and a solo of this instrument in the third movement is used to highlight the folk melody, which leads to the return of the Uzbek theme.<sup>27</sup> Clearly, the key instruments in this trio are the violin and clarinet. Concurring to this analysis of the piece, researchers claimed that Khachaturian chose to emphasize sounds of these instruments because the violin and clarinet are most appropriate for imitating not only instruments but also voices in folk melodies used in traditional dances and songs.<sup>28</sup> The interwoven nature of Khachaturian's *Trio* with folk tunes typical of Armenian, Georgian, Uzbek and other traditions should therefore be considered as a key features of the said piece.

Glancing through other musical pieces composed for trios of violin, clarinet and piano, Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* stood out in a way that it is also a three-movement work that represents the composer's interest in traditional Hungarian and Central European melodies. The first movement of this piece is "Verbunkos" which is known as a Gypsy and a military recruit dance, traditionally performed by a group of twelve soldiers in the

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<sup>25</sup> Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Era: 1917–1991*, 112.

<sup>26</sup> Christofakis, "The Music That Shaped a Nation," 36.

<sup>27</sup> Aram Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet (or Viola), Violin & Piano* (New York: International Music Company, 1980), 6.

<sup>28</sup> Jaffé, *Historical Dictionary of Russian Music*, 177.

eighteenth century, while Gypsy musicians served to accompany the dance.<sup>29</sup> The second movement of *Contrasts* is “Pihenő” which means relaxation in Hungarian, and it is the slowest movement in this work. Lastly, the third movement is “Sebes”, a Bulgarian traditional fast dance.<sup>30</sup> Bartók also used an irregular meter in order to draw special attention to the dynamics, and this maneuver prompts a violinist to retune two strings to achieve the expected sound effect.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the composer incorporated folk melodies and dances into the piece for the purpose of heightening the contrasts in these three movements. This specific feature of the trio was made perfectly clear by the composer by supplying the work with a self-explanatory title.

In his *Trio*, Bartók put strong emphasis on contrasts using a variety of means, including timbral techniques and different acoustic approaches. As a result, Bartók’s *Contrasts*, being an exemplary chamber music work, became associated with Neo-folklorism. In “Verbunkos”, the composer included a violin pizzicato buttressed by the clarinet in order to create a diversified main theme for this movement.<sup>32</sup> The focus here is on the variations and improvisatory characters that are instrumental for spotlighting the dynamics of folk melodies. Moving forward to the second movement, and it seems to go against the expectations of performers and listeners despite having a title that is supposed to be interpreted as “relaxation.”<sup>33</sup> By creating a false anticipation, this approach also contributes to the magnification of contrasts. The third and last movement, as discussed earlier, requires a violinist to retune two strings: lowering the E string to an E flat and raising the G string to a G sharp in order to capture the essence of folk dances tunes.<sup>34</sup> With the help of these approaches, Bartók not only integrated the Bulgarian rhythm into

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<sup>29</sup> Bartók, *Rumanian Folk Music*, 49.

<sup>30</sup> Heilman, “Program Notes,” 4.

<sup>31</sup> Béla Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 2002), 2.

<sup>32</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s *Contrasts*,” 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 45-46.

<sup>34</sup> Keller, *Chamber Music*, 29-30.



his work but also strengthened the rhythmic structure of the piece.<sup>35</sup> This is a basic summary of the key features of Bartók's piece which we will return to in greater detail later.

After the above brief discussion on Khachaturian's *Trio* and Bartók's *Contrasts*, it is possible to draw some comparisons between the two works. On the one hand, these two pieces are similar since they are composed for trios consisting of the clarinet, violin and piano, as well as their three-movement macro structure. Furthermore, the composers were interested in bringing folk tunes to their works because of the impact of their multicultural backgrounds. Also, the virtuoso use of rhythms and folk melodies is characteristic of both pieces. On the other hand, Khachaturian's *Trio* and Bartók's *Contrasts* have differences in the details of their structures. Bartók opted for a traditional fast-slow-fast movement form in order to accentuate the dynamics of his work, whereas Khachaturian chose to use a different form to set up a unique pattern in his *Trio*. Additionally, there are also differences in terms of the intentions and motivation for creating the said pieces as Khachaturian aimed at synthesizing different folk melodies in one work drawing inspiration from the influence of Myaskovsky, whereas Bartók created the piece for Joseph Szigeti and Benni Goodman as part of his pragmatic motives.<sup>36</sup> Even with the discussed similarities, these works are perceived by listeners as inherently different, and as a matter of fact, the composers created distinctive and unparalleled examples of chamber music that can hardly be compared.

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<sup>35</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, "Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók's *Contrasts*," 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 45, 341.

## V. Rhythmic Patterns in Khachaturian's and Bartók's Pieces

Studying the rhythmic structure of a musical piece is crucial for shedding light on the unique patterns and frames of the rhythms structured in a way to support the melody and main themes. The complex phenomenon of rhythm in music includes aspects such as meter and proportion among others, and the manipulation of these aspects allows composers to create specific and desired musical patterns.<sup>37</sup> Put into this context, cross-rhythms can be defined as the use of two conflicting rhythms in order to demonstrate specific rhythmic tensions, break the unity of the pattern, and feature two different rhythms at the same time.<sup>38</sup> As a result, a regular frame for accents supported by the predominant meter becomes contradicted by other patterns of the meter. If there are more than two conflicting rhythms, it is possible to speak of polyrhythm.<sup>39</sup> In the cases of the *Trios* examined in this thesis, different and complex types of rhythms can be readily observed in Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*.

Khachaturian often made use of repeated rhythms and quickly changing melodies that allowed for developing a pattern of the piece based on both complexity and clarity. Furthermore, one of the key features of Khachaturian's rhythmic patterns is the use of seconds as one of the expressions of his interest in folk music. In many of his works, including the *Trio*, the composer used a rhythmic ostinato in the form of short repeated patterns where chords are juxtaposed with minor and major seconds.<sup>40</sup> The use of seconds in the case of this *Trio* is influenced by sounds commonly heard in sazandar music (one of the three musicians in the traditional ensemble of instrumentalists performing Azeri folk music mugham along with a singer) as well as the

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<sup>37</sup> Wright, *Listening to Music*, 34-42.

<sup>38</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, "Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók's *Contrasts*," 2-4.

<sup>39</sup> Wright, *Listening to Music*, 34-42.

<sup>40</sup> Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Era: 1917-1991*, 112.

composer's focus on oriental or Central Asian musical patterns. According to Hakobian, "the use of such exotic chords instead of the standard minor and major fabric imparts to many pages of Khachaturian's music a peculiar 'impressionistic' spirit that is, perhaps, more akin to the very nature of oriental music," while the researcher objects to the idea that "the dynamism artificially thrust upon it by adaptations made in accordance with the concept of triadic tonality."<sup>41</sup> In this *Trio*, the example of Khachaturian's use of seconds can be seen in the beginning of the first movement where the arguably quite unique chords are bolstered by an unusual pattern of using minors and majors intervals. (Examples 5.1, 5.2).



Example 5.1. Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, "Andante Con Dolore, Con Molto Espressione," violin, mm. 5-6.<sup>42</sup>

Example 5.2. Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, "Andante Con Dolore, Con Molto Espressione," piano, mm. 4-6.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>42</sup> Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet (or Viola), Violin & Piano*, 2.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 2.

The use of seconds became a key feature of Khachaturian as he created rhythmic patterns in his works. According to the composer himself, “these seconds come from the numerous sounds of folk instruments which I had heard as a child: sazandartar (a family of long-necked lutes), gyamancha (a traditional, bowed string instrument) and drum (an Armenian traditional instrument played with the hands or a stick).”<sup>44</sup> In fact, these intervals are widely seen in many of the pieces by the composer. It is also important to pay attention to the fact that the accentuation of rhythms can also be observed in the second movement of the work, where Khachaturian referred to irregular rhythms as being helpful to imitate folk instruments. Moreover, it is plausible that the rhythmic pattern of Khachaturian’s work is based on the linguistic rhythm of the Armenian language, as noted by researchers.<sup>45</sup> The accent in words is expected to be placed on the last syllable, and this stress system is reflected in the second movement of the *Trio* where phrases are divided into sub-phrases in order to keep the rhythmic stress (Example 5.3). These rhythmic structures are considered as Khachaturian’s variants of cross-rhythms.



Example 5.3. Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, “Allegro,” clarinet in B flat, mm. 29-36.<sup>46</sup>

After analyzing Khachaturian’s specific vision of rhythm seen in his *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, the following section will be dedicated to a brief discussion of

<sup>44</sup> Christofakis, “The Music That Shaped a Nation,” 33.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>46</sup> Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet (or Viola), Violin & Piano*, 4.

Bartók's interpretation of rhythms. Bartók's rhythmic style is based on arranging symmetry and asymmetry together which covers elements such as pitches, forms and motives in his works.<sup>47</sup> In the first movement, the composer applied the inversional symmetry while interspersing asymmetrical elements among symmetrical pitches and forms. The mosaic use of symmetric and asymmetric rhythms allowed Bartók to showcase different instruments used in *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, different parts of the piece, and distinct ideas conveyed in his work.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, Bartók's use of contrasts in developing rhythmic patterns can also be seen in the manipulation of metric constraints and his appeal for improvisation.<sup>49</sup> The composer also applied metric dissonance in his work in order to emphasize certain parts of the melody with the help of cross-rhythms.

It is also important to pay closer attention to Bartók's use of Bulgarian meters and his method for incorporating folk melody rhythms with specific rhythmic transformations.<sup>50</sup> By doing so, the composer paved the way for metro-rhythm progression (a term used for describing specific flexible rhythmic structures in folk music, including Bulgarian music and dances in particular). Furthermore, as he tapped only to basic elements of folk traditions, his application of rhythmic structures made works sound rather aggressive, as noted by researchers.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, it is tempting to say that Bartók developed his own system of rhythms based on folk rhythmic structures where he defined such fixed rhythms as asymmetrical ones and variable rhythms in relation to mode hierarchies, as shown in the second movement of *Contrasts* (Example 5.4).<sup>52</sup> In addition, the composer also went for shifted rhythms as well as the alteration of certain parts of

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<sup>47</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, "Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók's *Contrasts*," 30.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>49</sup> Sarah Emily Lloyd Lawing, "Musical Borrowing in Three Homages by Béla Kovács: A Comparison of Pieces for Solo Clarinet with Repertoire by Debussy, Strauss, and Bartók," Diss., University of Georgia, 2012, 28-31.

<sup>50</sup> Bogdan, "Interpreting Bartók: A Creative Process," 8-10.

<sup>51</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 45-46.

<sup>52</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, "Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók's *Contrasts*," 3-4.

rhythmic segments.<sup>53</sup> All these features are significant for describing the aspects of Bartók's approach to rhythmic pattern formation in his works.



Example 5.4. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, “Pihenő,” mm. 65-68.<sup>54</sup>

The uniqueness of rhythms in Bartók's *Contrasts* has been studied with special attention paid to the analysis of its first movement “Verbunkos”. The accompaniment pattern used in this movement is *dűvő*, which is described as a four-measure structure of the meter where an accentuation is put on each second attack in its group. Usually played on stringed instruments, *dűvő* is typical of Hungarian folk melodies.<sup>55</sup> In “Verbunkos”, the offbeat *dűvő* appears along with the accentuation of dotted rhythms (Examples 5.5, 5.6). As a result, the combination of *dűvő* as an accompaniment pattern, dotted rhythms, along with the four-measure structure/phrase contributes to the creation of a specific improvisatory layout.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>54</sup> Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, 10.

<sup>55</sup> Keller, *Chamber Music*, 29-31.

Moderato, ben ritmato, ♩ = ca 100 - 94

③ pizz.

vn suggests *dűvő*

cl in A

pn

Example 5.5. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, “Verbunkos,” the first *dűvő* pattern, mm. 4-8.<sup>56</sup>

Meno mosso, ♩ = 75

③0

vn

cl in A

pn

slow *dűvő*

Example 5.6. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, “Verbunkos,” the second *dűvő* pattern, mm. 30-31.<sup>57</sup>

A movement of unusual and folk-based rhythm is further bolstered by the specifics of its form, as “Verbunkos” includes the elements typical of a ternary design, a truncated sonata form and an arch form. As a result, themes that appear in the movement are restated several times as different variants. Here, the key framing motive in the movement is powered by specific dotted rhythms and the piano’s offbeat entrance that paradoxically adds to the strengthening of the rhythmic structure in the movement.<sup>58</sup> These rhythmic patterns provide the background for two

<sup>56</sup> Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, 8.

<sup>58</sup> Keller, *Chamber Music: A Listener’s Guide*, 29-31.

key themes of the first movement, and the main rhythmic design used in “Verbunkos” is a short-long-short-long pattern.<sup>59</sup> In the first theme of the movement, sixteenth notes form the pattern with the stress on long strong beats; in the second theme of the movement, the pattern is formed by triplet eighth notes, and the stress is on short strong beats.<sup>60</sup> The dúvő accompaniment pattern is present throughout the two themes. Needless to say, two themes sound subtly yet distinctly different and together provide unique experience to the audience.

Variations in rhythmic patterns could also be understood within the framework of the composers’ use of contrasts in their works. Khachaturian played on contrasts in tunes and rhythms to show his ideas, as well as to emphasize the lines of particular instruments.<sup>61</sup> Bartók chose to tweak the dominant melody while introducing new lines in his piece, adding liveliness and authenticity to the piece.<sup>62</sup> Out of the interest in fashioning unusual rhythmic patterns from both composers, two unique pieces for trios including the violin, clarinet and piano were born. Nevertheless, the daunting problem that faces musicians is that they are expected to demonstrate their advanced skills and knowledge while performing these pieces studded with a variety of rhythms and cross-rhythms.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>60</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s Contrasts,” 4-8.

<sup>61</sup> Christofakis, “The Music That Shaped a Nation,” 33.

<sup>62</sup> Bogdan, “Interpreting Bartok: A Creative Process,” 8-10.



## VI. The Use of Folk Melodies in the Selected Works

Folk tunes were vigorously used by numerous composers during the early twentieth century to bring out vividness and originality in their works. Both Khachaturian and Bartók emphasized the influence of folk music in their development as composers. Reaping their diverse cultural backgrounds and absorbing folk music from different roots, these composers are enormously fruitful in combining various traditions and cultures in one musical piece.<sup>63</sup> The analysis of the literature on the folk melodies in Khachaturian's and Bartók's works can demonstrate the uniqueness of these pieces in terms of the contribution of folk tunes integration.

The discussion of the impact of folk melodies on the selected pieces should start with Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*. Granted that Khachaturian's music is often associated with the use of folk tunes due to his interest in music of the Caucasus, more work needs to be done in terms of the composer's specific approaches to the integration of folk traditions into his compositions.<sup>64</sup> According to previous researchers, even though direct quotations from traditional melodies, dances, or clear references to popular folk melodies can be found in Khachaturian's works, but these technique are comparatively less frequent as the composer favored the indirect used folk elements. For instance, the application of oriental scales is common in Khachaturian's pieces, but critics praised the elegance and subtlety with which the composer introduced the exotic ingredients into his pieces.<sup>65</sup> In many of his works, the composer followed the pattern typical of Armenian melodies and put the melodic climax at the beginning of the movement, whereas basic tones of the tune were placed after the descending movement.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 45, 341.

<sup>64</sup> David Z. Kushner, "Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): A Retrospective," *Athens Journal of Humanities and Arts* X.Y (2017): 2-6.

<sup>65</sup> Eimer Trio, *Khachaturian, Stravinsky, Keuris & Bartók: Works for Clarinet Trio*, Perf. Eimer Trio, Naxos, 1994, CD.

<sup>66</sup> Christofakis, "The Music That Shaped a Nation," 33-36.

In order to adapt the harmony and structure of scales, the composer also used unusual chords like diminished eighths.

Khachaturian adapted elements of folk music to suit his works, and in his *Trio*, the centering of folk melodies and instruments is unmistakable in each movement of the piece. In the first movement, “Andante Con Dolore, Con Molto Espressione,” the clarinet is used to imitate the zurna, a Transcaucasian wind instrument (Example 5.3).<sup>67</sup> The duet of the clarinet and violin creates the impression that a folk melody unfolds in a classical form, which sounds both familiar and exotic to listeners at the same time (Example 6.1). This strategy is also adopted in the other two movements of the piece. Furthermore, according to Kushner, “elements drawn from ashug music, such as melismatic melodic phrases, Eastern dance rhythms, modal flavoring, and, in the final movement an Uzbeki folksong, are combined with European features, including French impressionism.”<sup>68</sup> As Khachaturian is known for thinking in rhythm and harmony at the same time, it is safe to say that folk music also influenced Khachaturian’s use of rhythms pulsating in his signature seconds that are typical of Armenian and Eastern melodies.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>68</sup> Kushner, “Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): A Retrospective,” 6.

**Andante con dolore, con molto espressione, ♩ = 104**

Example 6.1. Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, “Andante Con Dolore, Con Molto Espressione,” mm. 4-6.<sup>69</sup>

In addition, it is also possible to claim that the structure and mood of Khachaturian’s *Trio* are imbued with not only folk melodies and patterns but also jazz harmonies (he was interested in Miles Davis for ‘all those different scales he uses’). This is due to the fact that Khachaturian paid much attention to the use of modern instruments to produce sounds typical of folk or traditional instruments, including the dohl (an Armenian traditional instrument played with the hands or a stick), kamancha (a traditional bowed string instrument) or duduk (a wooden double reed instrument).<sup>70</sup> According to Hakobian, “the force of Khachaturian’s music consists in the vividness of his initial musical ideas. His imagination is concentrated especially on inventing the main musical impulse, which usually plays the role of thesis that pierces the whole

<sup>69</sup> Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet (or Viola), Violin & Piano*, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Christofakis, “The Music That Shaped a Nation,” 32-33.

form.”<sup>71</sup> Khachaturian’s music as we have seen, including the *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, is full of references to folk music, yet is modernized and original-sounding in its character.

Interestingly, researchers have different opinions regarding the purpose of applying folk tunes in Khachaturian’s works. According to Kushner, Khachaturian “was an enthusiastic supporter of Communistic ideals, including expansion of ideology,” and his *Trio* seems to reflect “the aesthetics of the RAPM in its formal design and the folkloric features promoted by Stalin.”<sup>72</sup> Here RAPM is short for the Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians.<sup>73</sup> However, in the scholarly work by Schultz, he claimed that following the words of the composer, Khachaturian is a proponent of intercultural communication: Russian oriental music “showed me not only the possibility, but also the necessity of a rapprochement between, and mutual enrichment of Eastern and Western cultures, of Transcaucasian music and Russian music.”<sup>74</sup> Regardless of what the real standpoint the composer may have taken, the focus on folk melodies in the *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* along with other pieces was a bold step for the composer to assert his identity.

The influence of folk melodies on Bartók’s music in general and on *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* in particular is anything but less significant. Bartók had huge success in applying folk melodies in his works because, as a theorist, he paid much attention to the studying of the folk legacy of the Europeans with his focus firmly on traditions of Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>75</sup> A variety of musical traditions examined by the composer influenced his own style in

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<sup>71</sup> Hakopian, *Music of the Soviet Era: 1917–1991*, 112.

<sup>72</sup> Kushner, “Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): A Retrospective,” 6.

<sup>73</sup> Kiril Tomoff, *Creative Union: The Professional Organization of Soviet Composers, 1939-1953* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 116.

<sup>74</sup> Joseph Schultz, “Aram Khachaturian and Socialist Realism: A Reconsideration,” *Muzikologija* 20 (2016): 90.

<sup>75</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 46-47.

ways such as employing chromaticism in the melody, using certain chords, and applying folk songs and dances. In his compositions, Bartók used folk tunes that he had studied carefully during his expeditions, so much so that Bartók became the author of written works on folk music of different ethnic groups, as well as the compiler of several collections of folk songs and dances that were recorded.<sup>76</sup> The meticulous study of all the folk materials enabled the composer to pay close attention to the selection of instruments, arrangement of meters and rhythms, as well as adaptation of folk melodies and themes to the modern context of the twentieth century.

A clarification should be made here is that Bartók was interested in not only Hungarian folk traditions but also Eastern European ones, and according to the composer, “the folk songs are magnets that pull me toward the Orient.”<sup>77</sup> Therefore, a variety of folk influences can be traced in the composer’s *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*. The title of the work was given as the composer’s device to channel the audience’s attention to the complex characters of this piece where each movement is influenced by different folk and classical traditions. While “Verbunkos” represents melodies and rhythms typical of Gypsy and Hungarian dances, these motives are nevertheless also combined with elements of jazz and blues, further spotlighting timbral and rhythmic differences in themes.<sup>78</sup> Still in the first movement, the first theme, including violin pizzicatos, is followed by the folk-based *meno mosso* second theme.<sup>79</sup> The foregrounding of diversity is further strengthened with the help of the cadenza performed by the clarinet and the return to the theme led by the violin.

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<sup>76</sup> Béla Bartók, *Turkish Folk Music from Asia Minor*, ed. Benjamin Suchoff (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 10.

<sup>77</sup> Bartók, *Rumanian Folk Music*, x.

<sup>78</sup> Urdea Marcus and Hannah Phyllis, “Klezmer Elements in Paul Schoenfield’s Trio for Clarinet, Violin, and Piano: A Violinist’s Perspective,” Diss., Louisiana State University, 2018, 8-12.

<sup>79</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s *Contrasts*,” 4-8.

The folk music flavor in Bartók's *Contrasts* is obvious as he resorted to not only elements of Verbunkos as a dance but also to a Romanian melody heard in the second theme of the first movement. The ubiquity of folk melodies is readily observed in two other movements as well. "Piheňő", which is the second movement of the piece, was only added to *Contrasts* after the other ones were completed. Initially planned as a two-movement rhapsody, *Contrasts* was later expanded, and the "relaxing" part, i.e., "Piheňő" was added as another folk-inspired section.<sup>80</sup> Here the composer chose to add a slow interlude marked as Lento to arouse the sense of mystery characteristic of traditional songs that were popular in Eastern Europe,<sup>81</sup> and by doing so, the melodic patterns of *Contrasts* are further enlivened.

The third movement of the piece is "Sebes" or a fast dance that is infused with traditional Hungarian-style musical themes. Still, the third movement is also characterized by Bartók's folk tune inspired by fast dances, and this adaptation is so artful that no direct link can be found between the key theme of the movement and any folk melody widespread in Hungary at that time (Example 6.2). However, other researchers argued that "Sebes" is a quick dance of Bulgarian origin, and a virtuosic combination of different folk tunes allowed the composer to create a unique melody inspired by multiple traditional European tunes.<sup>82</sup>



Example 6.2. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, "Sebes," mm. 116-120<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Keller, *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide*, 29-31.

<sup>81</sup> David Cooper, *Béla Bartók* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 301.

<sup>82</sup> Béla Bartók, *Violin Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2, Contrasts*, Perf. György Pauk, Jenő Jando, and Kálmán Berkes, Naxos, 1993, CD.

<sup>83</sup> Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, 12.

To sum up, all three movements of Bartók's *Contrasts* are clear illustrations of the composer's integration of folk music into his own pieces. And in this regard, the works of both composers are full of folk elements that are viewed as attractive to performers and listeners even today. Khachaturian and Bartók are not only masters of using folk tunes closely associated with their own cultures and ethnic backgrounds, but they also excelled at finding unique and mosaic expressions through multicultural adaptations and putting them to use in their violin, clarinet and piano trios. At times, compositional styles would translate into the actual playing of performers, and therefore, the next chapter turns to the much needed discussion on how musicians can be productive in rehearsing these pieces.

## VII. Rehearsal Techniques and Performance of Khachaturian's and Bartók's Pieces

The researcher of this study is a violinist and active member of a trio group. The ensemble includes the clarinet, violin and piano, and the works by Aram Khachaturian and Béla Bartók are the staple repertoire of the group. With ample first-hand performing experience in Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, the researcher understands the significance of the discussion on effective rehearsal techniques that can be used by other performers with the aim of improving their practice and understanding of these works. The focus on the performance of *Trio* and *Contrasts*, as well as associated rehearsal techniques, came directly from the lack of literature on the performance of these complex pieces, when most researchers directed their attention to the folk melodies and rhythmic patterns appearing in these works. Also, for any trios consisting of clarinet, violin and piano, Khachaturian's *Trio* and Bartók's *Contrasts* are hugely important works, simply due to the scarcity of pieces created for such type of ensembles.

As mentioned earlier, a large amount of literature exists on the historical and cultural backgrounds of these works and their connections with folk music, whereas urgent attention are required in terms of the performance of these pieces as well as any effective rehearsal techniques that could be used by musicians. These compositions were viewed by contemporaries as rather unusual and provocative because of the combination of modernist tendencies with folk melodies.<sup>84</sup> As a consequence, the paramount task for performers should be the appropriate analytical process which supports musicians' better understanding of the role of traditional idiosyncrasies in performing these pieces and the consequential use of specific techniques, all against the backdrop of the cultural context of the work.

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<sup>84</sup> Keller, *Chamber Music: A Listener's Guide*, 30.



In general, rehearsal procedures for ensembles usually do not differ significantly depending on the selected compositions, but folk-based pieces may require additional efforts to make rehearsals smooth and efficient.<sup>85</sup> The first step is usually the meticulous work with the scores and annotations by the composers. For the authenticity of the sound, it is critical to refer to the edition of the scores created and noted by the composer, while different publishers and editors may use various letters and numbers for annotating.<sup>86</sup> At this stage, it can also prove highly beneficial if revered recordings and performances of the selected pieces are studied and examined in detail. In our case, for Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, it is important to refer to the original performance of the piece by Joseph Szigeti (violin), Benny Goodman (clarinet) and Béla Bartók (piano)<sup>87</sup>.

Rehearsals for these pieces should be scheduled considering the learning curves for the group as the musicians started to work on Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*. However, for the purpose of illustrating important rehearsal techniques to be used by musicians, it is necessary to refer to the examples of rehearsing for the performance of Bartók's *Contrasts*. The second step is the planning of rehearsals and to work with the scores. It was expected that, before starting rehearsals, each member of the ensemble should have learned the scores that they would use and discuss during rehearsal sessions. When the group first meets for the project, it is important to read and discuss the scores and performance instructions made by the composers. For instance, the group may set a target to complete analyzing the thematic structure of the first movement and present it in a visual form for performers to consult and follow during future rehearsals (Example 7.1). As to Khachaturian's *Trio*, it is also important to

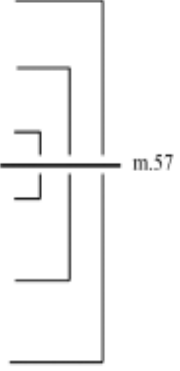
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<sup>85</sup> John F. Colson, *Conducting and Rehearsing the Instrumental Music Ensemble: Scenarios, Priorities, Strategies, Essentials, and Repertoire* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), 4-6.

<sup>86</sup> J. Murphy McCaleb, *Embodied Knowledge in Ensemble Performance* (London: Routledge, 2016), 2-8.

<sup>87</sup> Bartók, Béla. Bartók plays Bartók. Perf. Goseph Szigeti, Benny Goodman, and Béla Bartók. Naxos, 1940, CD.

concentrate on elements such as changes in themes and their repetitions in the form of a song and a refrain in the first movement of the piece, while the whole passage is framed in a cadenza form (Example 7.2).

Measures	Material	Formal Interpretation		
		Sonata Form	Ternary Form	Arch Form
1-2	Framing Motive	Framing Motive	Framing Motive	
2-29	Theme 1	Exposition	A	
30-57	Theme 2		B	
57-84	Theme 1 developed	Development	A'	
85-88 88-90 (unmetered)	Theme 1 Cadenza	"Recapitulation"	A	
90-93	Framing Motive	Framing Motive	Framing Motive	



Example 7.1. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, the thematic structure and primary pitch class of “Verbunkos”.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s *Contrasts*,” 5.



Example 7.2. Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, the first movement, mm. 26-28.<sup>89</sup>

Other constructive steps may include a review of the composition history and music trends during the period when the work was written.<sup>90</sup> Recordings that give glimpses into other musicians' performances and thinking should also be studied comparatively in order to have a well-informed and thorough interpretation of the composers' notes, virtuosic parts, and intricate moments. Bartok exploited the possibilities of both the clarinet and the violin, including wide ranging arpeggios for the violin, rapid scales and arpeggios, shifts of register and, left hand pizzicato with bowed note and a demanding Cadenza for the clarinet and violin.

The next step is to arrange regular rehearsals with the focus on sections or moments that may be or have been causing troubles during practice sessions. In Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, it could prove very handy to focus on the rhythmic patterns of the piece at this stage. While playing the first movement, the clarinetist is expected to concentrate on the dotted rhythm of the melody and use the Lydian/Mixolydian polymode effectively.<sup>91</sup> In the meantime, the violinist is expected to support this rhythm with the focus on pizzicato chords in order to allow the clarinetist to accentuate embellishments in the tonal pattern at the end of the theme. From bar 21 onwards, the main attention should be paid to the violin and the rising

<sup>89</sup> Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet (or Viola), Violin & Piano*, 4.

<sup>90</sup> Colson, *Conducting and Rehearsing the Instrumental Music Ensemble*, 4-6.

<sup>91</sup> Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, 301.

pattern of fourths supported by the piano. With this teamwork mindset, the focus on differences in rhythmic patterns will allow the performers to support each other's parts while staying at the same tempo.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the violinist needs to balance the shift leading to the middle part of the movement and to place due emphasis on the intensive rhythm as it approaches the climatic section (Example 7.3).

Example 7.3. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, the climatic section of “Verbunkos”, mm. 52-57.<sup>93</sup>

In particular, the ensemble focus should be on balance and articulation. Players should spend a lot of time adjusting the balance, making each other aware of who has the leading line (Example 7.4), who has a secondary part, who is supplying the harmony, from where the motor or moving part of the music is emanating, and then to decide which instrument line should be followed for articulation. Moreover, when working with pieces with substantial folk materials, performers need to pay more attention to composers’ notes and putting accents accordingly to

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 301-302.

<sup>93</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s *Contrasts*,” 11.

guarantee that the tone of the whole ensemble is balanced as stipulated by the composer.<sup>94</sup> More focus is also required on phrasing.

**a) Themes 1 and 2**

	Theme 1		Theme 2			
	Subsection 1	Subsection 2	Section 1		Section 2	
			Subsection 1	Subsection 2	Subsection 1	Subsection 2
Measure:	4	18	30	38	45	49
Hypermeter:	4-measure	irregular	4-measure	irregular	4-measure	irregular
Dominant melody instrument:	clarinet	violin	violin	clarinet	violin	clarinet

↑ **climax** (m. 53)      ↑ **pivotal point** (m. 57)

**b) Development** (RH = right hand; LH = left hand)

	Section 1		Section 2	
	Subsection 1	Subsection 2	Subsection 1	Subsection 2
Measure:	57	65	72	80
Accompaniment:			<b>vn</b> cl	<b>cl</b> vn
Primary voices: (in imitation)	cl, vn, & pn: <b>cl</b> - vn - pn, vn - cl - pn	vn, cl, & pn: <b>vn</b> /pn RH - cl/pn LH	pn	pn









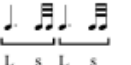
Example 7.4. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, Formal relations of “Verbunkos”.<sup>95</sup>

In the trio group of the researcher, the musicians would regularly rehearse the most complicated transitions all the way up to new themes and specific rhythm changes associative with Armenian and Hungarian folk melodies while sharing about the experience of working on the two most intriguing examples of trios for the clarinet, violin and piano ensemble. The focus was on maintaining rhythmic precision when playing dotted rhythms and cross-rhythms that are

<sup>94</sup> McCaleb, *Embodied Knowledge in Ensemble Performance*, 4-9.

<sup>95</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s *Contrasts*,” 21.

always reoccurring in Khachaturian’s *Trio* and Bartók’s *Contrasts*. Practicing rhythms is a complex task that put additional requirement on balancing the sound of the whole ensemble while focusing on slowing down or speeding up the parts according to the annotated scores (Example 7.5).<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, while rehearsing Khachaturian’s *Trio*, performers must have a solid grasp of major and minor seconds (Example 7.6). Meanwhile, it is always important to return to intonation, making sure that all instruments are playing correctly in tune according to the scores, and that musicians are listening to each other’s parts. Clarinet and violin unisons are generally uncommon, and due to the tempered tuning of the piano, the violin and clarinet player have to balance between natural and tempered playing, which requires precise observation in intonation. In addition, the violin player also has to tune the fifths between the strings a bit higher than normally to match the piano. All the instruments need to practice these techniques by playing softly, slowly and in different combinations.

pattern	metric accent (upper-case)	note values	in <i>Contrasts</i> , I	label
Short-Long	s-L	s = 	 (Theme 1)	A
	S-l	s = 	 (Theme 2)	B
	S-l (or s-L)	s = 	 (Theme 1, Theme 2 climax)	D
Long-Short	L-s	s =  	 (Themes 1 and 2)	C

Example 7.5. Bartók, *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*, the rhythmic structure of “Verbunkos”.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Colson, *Conducting and Rehearsing the Instrumental Music Ensemble*, 47-49.

<sup>97</sup> Leong, Silver, and John, “Rhythm in the First Movement of Bartók’s *Contrasts*,” 9.



Example 7.6. Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor*, the second movement, Khachaturian's seconds in the main theme, mm. 15-18.<sup>98</sup>

At the beginning of the second movement “Piheňő”, musicians have to strike a balance in their Klangfarbenmelodie with the use of the upper voices of the clarinet and the violin. The pianist, in this part, has agitated figures, and much attention should be devoted to the oscillations and falling chains.<sup>99</sup> All these above-mentioned hints, when performed well, would give a smooth lead to interlocking fifths and reflecting major thirds in the piano. The performance of the final part of *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* also requires musicians to have a special focus on the meter, tone and rhythm in order to produce sounds in unison while juggling with complicated major and minor chords and changing rhythms. As one can see, the explanation of appropriate rehearsal techniques furnished with the helpful examples of the group working on Bartók's *Contrasts* contributes to the better understanding of the required tools and approaches for the successful performance of pieces based on multicultural folk melodies.

An investigation of the history behind the creation of the folk inspired pieces and the involved folk materials is also conducive to a good performance of such compositions. For instance, during rehearsals of Bartók's *Contrasts*, it is good to remember that the piece is not only based on Hungarian folk music, but was also planned as a two-movement piece arranged as a lassu-friss (slow-fast) rhapsody where the slow and fast sections are paired.<sup>100</sup> These sections should therefore be played at the level of expression that is usually reserved for lassu-friss

<sup>98</sup> Khachaturian, *Trio for Clarinet (or Viola), Violin & Piano*, 6.

<sup>99</sup> Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, 301.

<sup>100</sup> Heilman, “Program Notes,” 4.

rhapsodies. For example: Bartók's Rhapsody no 2 for Violin and Piano and Kodály Duo for Violin and Violoncello, Op 7.

There are some final tips on rehearsal techniques one may find very practical and helpful. Ensemble musicians may find it beneficial if they make video recordings of their sessions at various stages, so that they can keep a better track of the mistakes they made and the progress they achieved. In addition, the group should redouble its efforts when it comes to the most difficult passages of the piece with the aim of achieving the balanced sound against the challenge of complicated rhythms and tempo among others.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, the analysis of the rehearsal techniques used for preparing the performance of Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* indicates that working on the folk materials can provide musicians with additional food for thoughts as well as targets to meet. At this point, this discussion hoped to have fulfilled its purpose of contributing to the practice and knowledge of performers.

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<sup>101</sup> McCaleb, *Embodied Knowledge in Ensemble Performance*, 63-65.



## VIII. Discussion and Conclusions

The review of the literature on Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano* has demonstrated that it is possible and constructive to speak about the relationship or links between composers' backgrounds, their interest in folk music, and their use of rhythms and folk melodies as a result of their cultural and ethnic identities. The existing literature on the topic and the close analysis of the selected pieces have provided information to the detailed identification and description of the key features of Khachaturian's *Trio* and Bartók's *Contrasts*. As a conclusive remark on the specific features of these two pieces, it is important to note that both works were influenced by musical trends seen at the beginning of the twentieth century when the composers envisaged their particular ensemble to include the clarinet, violin and piano.<sup>102</sup> Additionally, both works were products of inspiration coming from the composers' backgrounds and folk music. However, Khachaturian and Bartók chose different approaches to organize their movements in terms of their tempo patterns across the compositions respectively. Hence, the first research question has been addressed, and the features of these two works were discussed in detail.

The second research question has also been answered by the in-depth analysis of this study. The researcher concluded that Khachaturian and Bartók used rhythms and folk melodies in their pieces in a different manner even though the literature in general would lump their approaches under the umbrella concept of folk feature adaptation/integration. In fact, the analysis of the rhythmic structure in Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* directs our attention to elements such as his famous seconds and the rhythmic ostinato. The accentuation of these rhythmic elements allowed the composer to emphasize the lively character

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<sup>102</sup> Stacey and Henderson, *Encyclopedia of Music in the 20th Century*, 341.

of the movements in his work.<sup>103</sup> Khachaturian's seconds are frequently mentioned in researchers' analyses of the composer's musical style, and they have been described and investigated in detail in the current research.

Regarding his works, Khachaturian found inspiration in his cultural backgrounds that allowed him to combine traditions of different ethnic groups into musical pieces in a unique way, and the pan-nationalist characteristic of the pieces helped them become familiar or close to a wider audience. Although some researchers claim that Khachaturian's use of folk melodies and music traditions could be explained by his alignment to the authorities of the Soviet Union, it is still possible to argue that the primary motive of the composer was to reflect his own vision of his people's history.<sup>104</sup> It is also essential to focus on his identity reflected in his works which combined elements of Caucasian folk music, European folk music, Russian traditions and Oriental traditions in a way that was most appropriate for Khachaturian as a musician and as a person.

Regarding the rhythmic patterns and folk tunes used in Bartók's *Contrasts*, it is possible to conclude that the composer achieved his vision for an authentic musical piece. The composer was not limited to a direct interpretation of different folk traditions in this piece, and it seems that Bartók shifted agilely from one folk tune to another while making vivid accents on them with the help of cross-rhythms and other rhythmic elements in order to make the sound incredibly rich and colorful.<sup>105</sup> The result of this interplay of folk melodies with tones, meters and rhythms is that the piece has been closely associated not only with Hungarian traditions but also Bulgarian, Gypsy and Oriental ones. While performing the piece, musicians are offered an opportunity to

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<sup>103</sup> Hakobian, *Music of the Soviet Era: 1917–1991*, 112.

<sup>104</sup> Christofakis, "The Music That Shaped a Nation," 36.

<sup>105</sup> Cooper, *Béla Bartók*, 301.

showcase their virtuosity by demonstrating all contrasts that are present in this unique work, a truly vivid example of chamber music of the early twentieth century.

The third research question has also found its answer in this dissertation, as specific rehearsal techniques regarding the performance of Khachaturian's *Trio* and Bartók's *Contrasts* have been listed with the help of both the literature and the unique personal experience of the researcher as a performer. While summarizing these techniques, this paper pointed out that the musicians in trios working on these pieces are expected to pay much attention to the composers' original scores and notations for a better understanding of the specific desired sounds and their associated themes that were derived from folk tunes and traditions.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, it is crucial for violinists to pay close attention to fingering and bowing techniques in order to meet the composers' requirement on the sound effects. Last but not least, later sessions and rehearsal techniques should be aiming at achieving a perfectly balanced performance of the piece.

Trios including the violin, clarinet and piano need to follow the above-mentioned rules to successfully produce the balanced and harmonious sound. And when rhythms are concerned, the selected pieces are so complex that it always poses enormous challenges to the performers. With that in mind, it is expected that musicians stay extremely focused while rehearsing, and the outcomes of such efforts should work as a guarantee that the violin, clarinet and piano are complementary and harmonious in Khachaturian's *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano in G Minor* and Bartók's *Contrasts for Violin, Clarinet and Piano*.

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<sup>106</sup> McCaleb, *Embodied Knowledge in Ensemble Performance*, 63-65.

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